

Town Of Acton Conservation Lands Memorial Bench Policy

Purpose:	To provide a consistent and appropriate process that enables individuals and organizations to honor or memorialize members of the Acton community who have had a special connection to Acton's conservation lands in a manner that also supports the open space needs of the Town of Acton.
What may be donated:	This policy focuses on the donation of new or replacement benches (with or without recognition plaques) that contribute to the overall visitor experience and preserve the character of the conservation land setting.
Placement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved benches will be placed in Acton's *conservation lands. It is envisioned that a limited number of benches will be placed on each conservation land, and that they will generally be placed near, but not on, established trails.• A donor may request placement in a <i>specific parcel</i> of conservation land, and a <i>particular location within that parcel</i>; however, the exact placement (parcel and specific location) will be determined jointly by Acton's Land Stewardship Committee (LSCoM) and the Natural Resources Director of the Town of Acton. <i>See "Administrative Procedure" below.</i>• LSCoM will develop and maintain maps for each conservation land for which a donor has made a bench donation proposal showing existing bench locations and other acceptable locations for future benches, based upon its meetings with the Natural Resources Director. Other placements may be considered based upon such relevant factors as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ aesthetic attributes;○ avoiding disturbance to the visual plane;○ wildlife observation opportunities;○ avoiding sensitive ecology or habitat; and○ the number of other existing benches at the parcel.• Final location may be subject to change depending upon installation conditions.• The Town retains the right to relocate a donated bench and/or plaque at any time. [If relocation is necessary within the [7-8] year anticipated lifetime of the donated bench, and the Town's donation file contains current contact information, an effort will be made to contact the donor to discuss alternative locations; however, any final determination will be made jointly by LSCoM and the Natural Resources Director.]• *For purposes of this Policy, the term "conservation lands" includes the recreation lands associated with Great Hill Conservation Land[, <i>but does not include the Acton Arboretum. Those interested in bench donation opportunities at the Acton Arboretum will be referred to the Friends of the Acton Arboretum at info@actonarboretum.org</i>] ??
Specifications:	<p>Benches and materials used for specific parcels and sites will generally conform to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the style already successfully utilized at that parcel or similar sites; or• any particular function for that bench (e.g., a bench for bird-watching will have a back; non-birder benches in extremely naturalized surroundings might be backless and made of 3 granite slabs); or• other standards established by LSCoM and the Natural Resources Director from time to time.

Recognition Plaque:	A small plaque identifying the donor and/or celebrated individual or event will be accepted. Plaques are generally provided by the bench manufacturer and will usually be placed on the back of the donated bench. The size (usually 2-3" tall x 4-8" wide), number of lines (usually 2-3) and material (usually brass, bronze-toned zinc or similar) depends upon the style of bench.
Cost:	<p>In general, the donor's cost is based upon the following formula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application fee of [\$25]; plus • Actual cost of the bench (including a recognition plaque, if desired, and S+H); plus • Cost for installation and any permits; plus • Estimate of costs for the Town to maintain the bench (against general wear & tear only) over [7-8] years <p>The Order Form for the bench (as opposed to the Application Form) also invites (but does <i>not</i> require) the donor to make an additional donation of any amount, which will be earmarked to support LSCo's operating budget.</p>
Administrative procedure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are reviewed year-round; however, the timing of bench installation depends upon the time of year an application is received, the number of other pending applications and installations, and the availability of town staff or LSCo volunteers to perform such work. • An Applicant completes and submits a Bench Donation Application with a [\$25] application fee to the Director of Natural Resources. • LSCo and the Natural Resources Director review the application, the proposed language for the plaque (if any), and approve or deny the application. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the application is denied as submitted, suggested changes (including alternate bench locations) will be offered. The Applicant is then contacted by [LSCo? Natural Resources Director?] to discuss status. • If the application is approved, or if modifications to a denied application that are acceptable to donor, LSCo and Natural Resources Director are made, the donor completes and submits a bench Order Form with full payment. • [LSCo? Natural Resources Director?] orders the proper bench and plaque (if desired). At this point, donor cannot seek a refund unless bench supplier agrees. An installation date is tentatively scheduled. • The donor is notified by [LSCo? the Natural Resources Director?] when the bench has been installed.
Maintenance and replacement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town will undertake to provide regular maintenance for donated benches <i>for normal wear and tear only</i>. • The Town will not undertake responsibility for damage caused by extreme weather conditions or vandalism, nor is it responsible for replacing stolen benches. • If Town staff or LSCo determine that a donated bench has become unsafe or would require an unreasonable expenditure of time or money to repair or restore, it will be removed, even if the originally anticipated [7-8] year lifetime of the bench has not yet elapsed.
Tax deductibility:	This policy is intended to enable donors to support the Town's conservation lands through a tax-deductible contribution. Prospective donors will be encouraged to consult their tax advisors as to tax deductibility under their own financial circumstances and to see IRS Publication #526.

Reporting and Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [LSCOM? the Natural Resources Director?] will periodically advise the Conservation Commission of the Town of Acton regarding bench standards selected for particular Acton conservation lands or functions under this Policy. • [LSCOM? the Natural Resources Director?] will periodically advise the Conservation Commission of all bench purchases and placements made under this Policy. • All amendments to this Policy are subject to approval by the Conservation Commission of the Town of Acton.
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts of donated benches will be accepted only with the donors' understanding that they become the property of the Town of Acton and are subject to the laws, policies and procedures that govern Town of Acton property and the Town's conservation and recreation lands, and are [presumably] covered by the Town's existing insurance coverage. • Literature/forms describing Acton's bench donation program will include the salient elements of this Policy and will disavow responsibility for any unauthorized benches, and for the purchase, placement, maintenance, etc. of benches that do not comply with this Policy.